

all the writings that were the product of his brilliant mind. I will mention, however, his "Institutes of The Christian Religion," which is one of the most remarkable products of the uninspired human mind in any age. This work was produced by the marvelous intellect of the young man, John Calvin, when but twenty-seven years of age, and was published in the year 1535-36. In two subsequent editions he revised and perfected his work. But the wonderful maturity of Calvin's youthful genius is evidenced in the fact that, although the last edition published in 1559 is the most perfect, gaining in method and clearness, yet no important changes or additions in doctrine are found over the product of his early genius.

Besides this work Calvin produced commentaries on the entire Bible, with the exception of Judges, Ruth, the Samuels, the Kings, Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Revelation. From these omissions it is clearly seen that Calvin's mind does not turn to the exposition of historical Scripture, but rather to those portions which contain the very root of doctrinal truth upon which saving faith rests. Of the interpreter of God's Word Calvin said: "The chief excellence of an interpreter consists in a perspicuous brevity; and since almost his only duty is to unfold the mind of the writer whom he hath undertaken to explain, he misses his mark, or certainly wanders in some measure from his design, in proportion as he withdraws his readers from his object. We were therefore desirous that of the number of those who intend at present to assist divinity by writing commentaries, some one might arise who made plainness his chief study, while he labored not to retard the progress of the student by prolix commentaries."

How nearly Calvin approached his ideal as a commentator, those who have read his works need not be told. Honesty of purpose to discover the meaning of the inspired writer, and remarkable clearness in presenting the divine intent, so as to be intelligible to the laity, characterizes all his commentaries. In present day exposition there is an increasing demand for condensation and the merest suggestive outline. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says that Strong's Critical Concordance is the most valuable aid to an understanding of the Scriptures. That may all be true of the minister and the critical student, who ought to dig and not pilfer; but for the common people, for whom Calvin expressly wrote, it will scarcely hold good. The Commentaries of John Calvin, for sound, rational, honest, common-sense interpretation of God's Word, have few if any superiors. They are almost modern in their brevity, far surpassing in this respect any other commentator of the Reformation period, and they fill a most useful place today in the library of any Christian minister or layman.

It is noticeable, also, that Calvin never avoids the difficult problems, as do many expositors of the Word. The more difficult the passage the more earnestly does he apply his keen, penetrating intellect and clear perception of the truth to its just solution. Of Calvin's commentaries, perhaps that on the Book of Job in the

Old Testament, and that on Romans in the New, may be said to stand at the summit.

With respect to the Institutes, it would be impossible in this paper to in any adequate sense review this work or set forth its excellencies. It is sufficient to say that they were the first attempt to adduce in order, and scripturally defend, the great doctrines that gave irresistible power to the Reformation. It would be difficult to overstate the value and the far-reaching effect of the publication of this work. It formed the very backbone of the Reformation, and I may say that the great living doctrines, promulgated in Calvin's Institutes, with very slight alteration, form the essence of the most virile Christianity of today.

John Calvin's keen and powerful pen wrought revolutions, doctrinal and political, that are permanent. John Calvin's pen was the greatest constructive force of the 16th century to mold and direct the destinies of the Church of Christ.

All hail to the consecrated pen of John Calvin, and to the godly genius that moved behind that pen!

Atlanta, Ga.

### THE CALVIN ANNIVERSARY.

By Rev. H. E. Dosker, D. D.

#### I.

At the request of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., I am to write a few articles, destined for the Presbyterian press in the country, which are in some measure to prepare our people for an intelligent participation in the celebration, next summer, of the four hundredth birthday of John Calvin.

Is it worth while? The reply is—that the true valuation of men and events can only be given by a remote generation. No man is truly appreciated by his contemporaries. Guizot has said of this matter, in his little sketch of the life of Calvin—"The time has come, I think, when we ought to understand them (the Reformers) aright, and appreciate them justly." And the world today seems to think so. Men in general have assigned to Calvin his true place in history. They have recognized the immense significance of this great leader of human thought for the development of modern society. In Geneva, which claimed the best part of his mature activity, a statue, or rather a group of statues, is to be erected, which will forever remind the world of the debt it owes him. And the men who foster the movement are by no means all of them his spiritual children, some of them stand at the very opposite pole, but, with the utmost unanimity, all join in commemorating Calvin the man, rather than Calvin the theologian and Reformer. Our celebration will not exclude the latter view of Calvin, but it will rather emphasize the spiritual debt we owe him, as the founder of the Reformed Churches throughout the world.

The system, which bears his name, is wrongly so-called. He, of all men, would have been the last to sanction the use of the name Calvinism. His very principles would have forbidden it. The main outlines of